



## *Prison Registers in Institutions And Organisations*

Prisons were often in old buildings, such as castles. They tended to be damp, unhealthy, insanitary and over-crowded. All kinds of prisoners were mixed in together, men, women, children; the insane; serious criminals and petty criminals; people awaiting trial; and debtors. Each prison was run by the gaoler in his own way. He made up the rules. If

you could pay, you could buy extra privileges, such as private rooms, better food, more visitors, keeping pets, letters going in and out, and books to read. If you could not, the basic fare was grim. You even had to pay the gaoler to be let out when your sentence was finished.

Law and order was a major issue in Victorian Britain. Victorians were worried about the huge new cities that had grown up following the Industrial Revolution - how were the masses to be kept under control? They were worried about rising crime. They could see that transporting convicts to Australia was not the answer and by the 1830s Australia was complaining that they did not want to be the dumping-ground for Britain's criminals.

Discovering your ancestor in prison records doesn't necessarily make them a hardened criminal, nineteenth century law was harsh and children as well as adults were imprisoned for minor misdemeanors. These records are often very detailed and can include physical descriptions of height, weight and eye colour.

### Charles Allen 1871

	Surname	Given Names	Age	Trade or Occupation	Degree of Instruction					
<b>Accused</b>	Allen	Charles	54	Labourer	Neither read or write					
<b>Birth Year</b>										
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address						
<b>Committing Magistrate (1)</b>	Fowle	T. E. Esq.		Chute Lodge Andover						
<b>Committing Magistrate (2)</b>	Gale	J. H.	Rev.	Milton, Pewsey						
<b>Date of Warrant</b>	1871	30-Jun								
<b>When Received into Custody</b>	1871	30-Jun		<b>Date of Trial</b>	1871	17-Jul				
<b>Offence as Charged in the Commitment</b>	Stealing a half-sovereign, a two shilling piece, a threepenny piece, and other monies to the amount of fifteen shillings, the property of William Davis, at North Newnton on the 22 June 1871									
	Surname	Given Names	Title							
<b>Before Whom Tried</b>	Wiles	Justice	Mr.							
<b>Verdict of Jury</b>	Not Guilty of larceny									
<b>Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in</b>										

<b>Court</b>								
<b>Sentence or Order of the Court</b>								